Student Activities

New York Trip 2015

Twenty-one second year BFA students participated in the New York City Trip in fall, from November 4th to 7th, chaperoned by Prof Kathleen Sellars and Prof Rebecca Anweiler. The following conversation between Kathleen and BFA'18 student Austin Henderson provides a student view of this year's trip.
BFA Student Volunteering

Congratulations to the Agnes Etherington Art Centre for receiving the Ontario Association of Art Galleries’ Exhibition of the Year Award for Charles Stankievech: monument as Ruin. Something you not be aware is that Jonas Lobo (BFA’16) worked as a student volunteer on this project, helping the artist to build the armature for the cement sculpture, as see in the photo above.

2015 Upcoming Events

January 14th
George Walker, Artist Lecture
2:30 pm Stirling “A”

January 15th
George Walker, Book-print demonstration, 12:00 pm Ontario Hall

February 4th
Yael Brotman, Artist Lecture
2:30 pm Stirling “A”

February 23rd
Ciara Phillips, Artist Lecture
11:30 am Bio Sciences 1102
(Part of the Koerner Artist Residency: February 21st to March 6th)

Sellars: What galleries did you visit?
Henderson: On the first evening, we went as a group to the Whitney Museum of American Art. It was wonderful to see such a wide variety of works by artists such as Jackson Pollock, Frank Stella, and much more! On the second day, we went as a group, again, to the MoMA, where we saw masterpieces by Van Gogh, Monet, Klimt, Lichtenstein, and Dali, just to name a few. Seeing Van Gogh’s, Starry Night was a favourite moment of mine, and many of my classmates for sure! The following day, a few others and I went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We spent about six hours there and didn’t even see half of the museum, as the collections were so vast and interesting! The museum included artifacts from antiquity, as well as artworks from today, and everything in between. I’d have to say that was my favourite museum of all the ones we visited. On our final day in the city, a few of my friends and I went to the Neue Galerie, which features artworks by mostly German and Austrian artists. Luckily enough, the gallery recently acquired Klimt’s Portrait of Adele Blauch-Bauer I, a.k.a. The Woman in Gold, so being able to see that in person was quite the treat!

Sellars: Is there a particular show or artwork that really stood out for you and why?
Henderson: I was really drawn to Frank Stella’s retrospective exhibition at the Whitney. I didn’t know much about Stella’s body of work before the trip, so seeing the breadth in his paintings and sculptures was really shocking! I had no idea that most of his works were so monumental. One of my favourite pieces of his featured in the show, however, was a metal sculpture, entitled K.81 Protogen. Its colours and whimsical forms reminded me of a giant, robotic insect, and it was unlike anything I’d ever seen before.

At the Met, I was really happy to see one of my favourite historical paintings, Soap Bubbles by Jean Siméon Chardin, just because that’s a painting that’s always inspired me. Seeing Renoir’s works there was also a favourite moment, since he’s an artist I really admire. If I could go back in time, he’s one of those people I’d like to sit down and have lunch with.

Sellars: What other activities did you get up to in NYC?
Henderson: Aside from gallery visits, a few of my friends and I did a lot of walking around the city, and did some shopping, of course! A few of my classmates and I strutted around Fifth Avenue and explored a lot of the luxury stores: Chanel, Valentino, Louis Vuitton, and Tiffany & Co. Since we couldn’t afford anything there (yet!), we hit a couple lesser-known thrift shops in the southern part of the city, near Battery Park. We also made sure to take strolls through Central Park, and even had breakfast there one morning, just before it was about to rain. A small group of us saw The King and I on Broadway, and also paid a visit to the 9/11 Memorial, which was a very moving experience. As a group, the class went to Ellen’s Stardust Diner, where the waiters and waitresses sing songs while you eat. Talk about dinner and a show! That was a fun experience, for sure.

Sellars: Was there a highlight of the trip for you?
Henderson: For me, the highlight of the trip was seeing The King and I on Broadway with my classmates, Chelsea, Ramolen and Shaylyn. We managed to get discounted orchestra-level tickets the day of the show, and got all dressed up for the occasion. Personally, I had only seen musicals in Toronto, and I’ve loved them ever since I was little, so seeing my first real Broadway production was definitely memorable. Of course, the show itself is a classic, and it won some Tony Awards earlier this year, so being able to say that I saw a multi-Tony Award-winning production is pretty cool, to say the least. The cast and orchestra were phenomenal, and there’s something special about Broadway audiences, too. They have a huge appreciation for the players, and they treat them like celebrities. When Kelli O’Hara, the lead actress, and one of the Tony Award-winners for the show, made her first entrance, the crowd roared, and I had never experienced anything like that from seeing shows in Toronto. Anyway, I’m still singing along to the soundtrack, and I pinned up my Playbill and ticket stub in my bedroom as a reminder of that night, so it’s safe to say that was my highlight!

Sellars: Has the experience impacted on your studies/studio work since you have returned? How?
Henderson: More than anything, the trip had a huge influence on how I perceive art. For
example, I was able to see a lot of abstract artists’ work, past and present, and seeing their works in the flesh changed the way I think about it altogether. I have began to appreciate their technique, their colours, their brushstrokes, and the way their work comes to life on its surface. Rothko’s or Pollock’s works, for example, are not the same in a textbook as they are in person. The same goes for non-abstract artists, too. Being able to see their brushstrokes, the cracks in the canvas, and imagining their immersion into their masterpieces, is unlike anything you can get from a photo. There’s such a wide variety of artwork in the city, and not all of it has to be in galleries. I saw many artworks on walls and sidewalks, and it simply opened by eyes to what is out there, and what I can experiment with. It broadened my horizons in many ways, so I know I’ll take those experiences and put them into my work in the future.

Sellars: Would you recommend the trip? Why?
Henderson: Of course I would recommend the trip! Even if you’ve been to The Big Apple before, going with your art class is a special way to experience it. Since you’re taking the trip with your fellow art students, you’re able to have conversations about the art you see, and that’s so much better than discussing art with someone who doesn’t share the passion for it. It’s a memory you and your classmates will treasure for years to come, and there’s not much better than that. If I could go again with my class, I would in a heartbeat, and I think everyone else would agree! It was an unforgettable and enriching experience for every single one of us.

Student Mentorship: A Third Year BFA Perspective
Well, my name is Kia Kortelainen. Born in Edmonton into a military family has sent me travelling across Canada for the majority of my life, to North Bay, Barrie and more. I’m currently in Queen’s BFA third year and the art I make stems around how far I push my limits in whatever medium that suits my fancy for a project—my favourites being taxidermy, film, and digital illustration. Alongside art I love to play multiple roles; currently I am a cartoonist for Queen’s Journal, Head of Paint for the drama department’s Macbeth, and Concept Artist for a start-up game studio. I like to wander around Kingston volunteering for random events and at Modern Fuel Artist Run Centre. A job I’m stoked to start is working with graduate student Shalon T W-h on a master’s project involving a series of performance art pieces that will be presented in March.

While I love to create art on an individual basis, recently, collaboration has been more of a focus (mainly due to working on several theatre productions over the last few months). That being said, being a Mentor allows for me to not only help and share my advice but also to learn extensively in the process. I hope to be able to inspire my mentee(s) to continue to pursue creative expression (whether through fine art or not) and encourage them to explore and engage with the resources they have around them. Basically I am aiming to be somebody whom I wish I had around to guide me in first year! So far my mentee’s concerns have revolved around BFA life and how to talk to professors but something I hope to bring up in the future is how to expand practices in the BFA to real life, and maybe some silly conversations about the artist life.

I would definitely recommend others to participate in BFA mentorship; it’s a great opportunity to learn and engage with peers but to also experience what it’s like to contribute your knowledge to help others. It’s exciting to participate in such a positive BFA DSC activity and I’m looking forward to what is in store next.

Faculty Goings-on
Sarindar Dhaliwal, Cultural Studies PhD student and Teaching Fellow in the Fine Art Program, is currently showing her work titled The Radcliffe Line and Other Geographies at the reach gallery in Abbotsford, BC, through to January 3, 2016. Sarindar has also designed a coin for the Canadian Mint as part of the “Diwali: Festival of Lights” mintage. Check it out at

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday!

December 2015